



June 10, 2008

Jane Winn
Berkshire Environmental Action Team
27 Highland Ave.
Pittsfield, MA 01201

Re: Response to Proposed Timber Harvest Comments

Dear Ms. Winn,

I would like to thank you for your comments submitted to me on January 24, 2008 on our Proposed Timber Harvest Summaries posted on January 9, 2008 . I apologize for the long delay getting my responses back to you. These informational meetings were held at 5 different locations around the state (Pittsfield, Amherst, Carver, Clinton and Carlisle) on January 17, 2008. We hope that as more folks become aware of this forum, it will become a valuable exchange of information and ideas. While none of your comments address any of the specific proposed timber harvests, I will do my best to answer the questions that you raise in your letter.

1. US Forest Service funding: Unfortunately, we did not receive funding from the US Forest Service this year for the public forestry outreach and education campaign. While I was disappointed, my hope is to submit the proposal each year until it is funded. We will probably pursue other funding avenues, as I believe this is a critical element of the work that we are trying to accomplish.

2. Conservation Commission notification: The conservation commissions in each town or city where the proposed harvests are to take place are not notified at this point in the process. However, if the proposed project becomes a viable timber harvest project, they will see the Forest Cutting Plan and have a chance to review it before the project gets final approval.

3. Abutter notification: As above, the abutters to these proposed projects are not notified but will be (according to our existing policy on abutter notification) if and when the project moves forward to an actual timber harvest project.

4. Email notification of timber harvests: DCR maintains a list of people and companies that are interested in timber harvests. This list, however, is geared more towards loggers that are potentially interested in bidding on individual harvests. Letters are sent to all people on the list

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that have expressed interest in the type of harvest that is being conducted. The Proposed Timber Harvest Summaries (PTHS) are posted twice a year on the DCR Management Forestry Program website (see <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/forestry/manage/ProposedForestProductsSales.htm>). It is not currently our plan to establish an email list of everyone interested in being notified of all timber harvests.

5. *Rare species studies:* we work closely with the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) staff to give them time before the actual timber harvest is scheduled for them to review the plan. We submit all of our PTHSs to them even before they are posted at the DCR website. Keep in mind that it might be months or even years from the time that a PTHS is posted to the time that the project starts. While not a perfect system, we believe that we are being as cooperative and as up front as possible with NHESP to identify these sensitive species and sites before the project gathers too much momentum. It is clearly in our best interests to get this feedback from them sooner rather than later.

6. *Rare bird surveys, rare invertebrate surveys, watchlist plant species surveys, and vernal pool surveys:* The DCR Bureau of Forestry does not have the human or financial resources to perform all of the surveys that you have asked about for each timber harvest. However, if you would like to make specific suggestions about various surveys that you would like to see happen, supply names, credentials and the DCR property location to me and we will consider coordinating these surveys using staff from non-profit organizations or public sector volunteers (see #7 below).

7. *DCR cooperation with non-profit organizations and volunteers:* We are happy to cooperate with qualified non-profit organizations and volunteers. As I said in #6 above, if you would like to make specific suggestions about various surveys that you would like to see happen, supply names, credentials and the DCR property location to me and we can move forward on it.

8. *DCR cooperation with DFG to implement the MA Wildlife Action Plan:* Even though our mission at DCR is somewhat different from the mission of DFG, we cooperate with them on many issues involving wildlife habitat and biodiversity. One of the reasons why we are committed to preserving 20% of all DCR land as Reserve land is to protect large tracts of unfragmented wildlife habitat. We have made an effort to include a wide variety of vegetation communities, topography, aquatic systems, and old growth areas in the selection of these Reserve areas by consulting extensively with DFG, NHESP and others to insure that we are preserving some of the best land possible. We attempt to deal with exotic invasive plants whenever possible. We have policies to insure that every timber harvest is not only sensitive

to the needs of rare plants and animals but also is done to insure that some trees remain that are especially important to certain wildlife species, such as snags and trees with obvious nesting and/or cavity evidence. We also are committed to creating and maintaining existing early successional habitat but this has been extremely controversial with a certain segment of the public that is very uncomfortable with any forest management that they label as “clearcuts”. I suggest that you and your colleagues engage these people in a meaningful dialog to try to educate them that these “clearcuts” serve a valuable wildlife habitat function.

Please let me know if I missed any of your questions, if you find any of these answers unsatisfactory or if you have any additional questions.

Respectfully submitted,

David Goodwin, Acting State Land Manager
Bureau of Forestry